

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page 5, please replace the paragraph that starts on line 22 with the word Figures and ends on line 28 with the word layer with the following amended paragraph:

Figures 3a and 3b show[[s]] four possible arrangements for the active portion of the strip including the contact pads, traces and electrodes. Figs. 3a and 3b as well as Figs. 5, 6a, 6b, 7, and 8 illustrate unique electrode constructions described in co-pending patent application, United States Serial Number [\_\_\_\_\_] ~~[Attorney Docket Number 58672US002]~~ 10/702828, incorporated in its entirety by reference. The unique electrode constructions have necked portions that reduce the coefficient of variation for electrodes having an area defined by a patterned conductive layer and an overlying patterned insulative layer.

On pages 10-11, please replace the paragraph that starts on page 10, line 20 with the word Figs. and ends on page 11, line 12 with the word embodiments with the following amended paragraph:

Figs. 6a –6c (and Fig. 7) show an L-shaped embodiment of an off-set circuit. As can be seen, the contact pads 737 can be inserted into an analyte measuring device while electrodes 738 remain outside the analyte measuring device. An advantage of the L-shaped circuit is that the fluid wicking channel does not extend the entire width of the circuit portion. This results in a reduced fluid sample volume requirement, which allows for the use of a smaller circuit. The L-shaped circuits thus minimize the size of circuit needed in the test strip. A sensor strip built for ease of handling would be wide, but if the fluid wicking channel extends the width of the strip a larger fluid sample would be required. The L-shape allows a shorter wicking channel, even with a wide sensor strip. As illustrated in Fig. 7, the L-shaped circuit allows for a small electrode area, while still providing a large contact area. This is desirable because the contact portion interfaces with an analyte measuring device and the contact pads need to be large enough to establish a good connection with the conductive features of the measuring device. In addition, the L-shaped circuit achieves the small electrode area and large contact area with short trace

elements. This keeps the active portion of the sensor small and cuts down on the use of expensive materials required for the active portion. The L-shaped circuit also prevents contaminating the analyte measuring device when the sensor circuit is inserted to obtain a reading because the electrode area, which receives the fluid sample, is physically separated from the contact area, which is inserted into the measuring device, thereby eliminating or minimizing the likelihood of the analyte sample entering the measuring device. Another possible embodiment of the off-set circuit is a modified-U shape in which the electrode region and contact region are in parallel orientations and the traces connecting them form an arm/base/arm U shapes in which one arm is shorter than the other. Figures ~~[[3b]]~~ 3a and ~~[[3d]]~~ 3b illustrate additional off-set ~~circuit~~ circuit embodiments.